

College of West Anglia
Minutes of Performance, Review and Quality Committee
Wednesday, 5 March 2025
8:30am – 11.00am
Meeting Room, Principals Suite, Kings Lynn Campus

Present	Chris Ashman	Governor (Chair)	In person
	Fliss Miller	Governor (Vice Chair)	Remote
	Jan Feeney	Governor	In person
	Samantha Fletcher	Governor	In person
	Paul Gibson	Governor (Staff)	In person
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal/CEO)	In person
Attending	Kery Heathcote	Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality	In person
	Rob Petto	Assistant Principal Funding and Performance	In person
	Sarah Anstiss	Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning	In person
	Sue Moore	Head of Faculty - Technology	In person
	Jules Bridges	Head of Governance	In person

No.		Action
1	Apologies There were no apologies for absence from committee members. Apologies were received from the Head of Learner Experience, Clare Pelling.	
2	Declarations of Interests There were no items of interest declared.	
3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 6 November 2024 The minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2024 were reviewed and agreed as being an accurate record subject to replacing the word 'ProObserve' with 'SharePoint' in the second paragraph of item 12.	HoG
4	Matters Arising The progress arising from the previous meeting were summarised in the progress report and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda. The Chair asked to see more employer case studies to see evidence of apprenticeship impact from the employer's perspective. It was noted that there will be evidence from the Ofsted Inspector feedback meetings and internal case studies can be worked up from employers such as Anglian Water, Perkins Engines, and Bramham Electrical. The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality had investigated the query about moving students who withdraw onto smaller qualifications to accredit their learning, but this would take significant resource and financial impact if multiple registrations were in place across all areas, so an impact assessment will take place on an individualised learner and course-by-course basis. It was confirmed that items 11 to 14 had been reassigned to the interim Head of Quality and the Quality Enhancement Manager and progress would be reported at the next meeting of the committee.	HoAppWBL HoF-Tech HoQ QEM
5	Priority Item 1 – Apprenticeships/Technology In addition to the written report, it was confirmed that the achievement rate has gone up to 45.7% with 100 achievements to date, of which 37 were distinctions, 7 merits and the rest, pass. In Technology, 85 apprentices have gone through the gateway since	

September 2024, 56 achieved and 29 are currently waiting for achievements to come through. The percentage of apprentices past their end date has reduced from 18% (July 2023), this time last year was 12% and is now at 8%. The target for the team has been reset to below 5% by the summer.

The transition of Solutions 4 Polymers Ltd apprentices will also help reduce this further and positively impact CWA outcomes. The college has been given a special dispensation code to use in the ILR for the transfer of these learners as otherwise they would be treated as a withdrawal which would negatively impact CWA performance outcomes. Not all 60 apprentices will transfer by 31 March 2025 as some learners will remain with CWA as these are predicted to complete and achieve this year.

Plumbing remains an area of concern. A new assessor is to be appointed so this will improve if the candidate takes up the post. Until staffing is resolved recruitment in this area is paused. In terms of leadership and management it has been reported to Ofsted Inspectors that CWA is seeing the improvement intervention being realised, governors are making a difference by challenging and insisting on needing to see impact and improvement. The college is focused on the quality of provision, reporting capabilities are much improved, enabling transparency and accuracy, and teams are striving for better achievement rates. CWA was right to self-assess as 'requires improvement' in the 2023/24 academic year but would predict that this could be upgraded by the end of this academic year.

A governor raised a question around current in year performance as recruitment was down in some areas and this wasn't consistently reported in all the papers to the committee plus the action plan lacked completion dates and SMART targets. The Principal/CEO highlighted that the recruitment summary provided in the report related to funding and broadly the focus for this committee is quality of provision, so the Finance and General Purposes committee and Corporation would pick up this issue. In terms of income however, CWA is not radically down on income or target numbers but maybe a bit lighter in areas where quality has been put higher on the agenda. In terms of the action plan and SMART targets, it was agreed that these should be worked up.

HoAppWBL
HoF-Tech

The Chair commented that the report detailed that there are 166 in year starts against a target of 363 and questioned if the target was achievable in the year. In response, it was noted Technology, for example, has not recruited to two programmes (Engineering Design Draftsman and Food and Drink Maintenance) and these have been remodelled to standards that better meet the needs of apprentices and employers. Plumbing contributed significantly to the shortfall in number of learners recruited against target. It was a strategic decision not to recruit because of the number of learners past their end dates. There is more confidence with engineering and team structural changes and focus on quality has positively impacted. The Chair asked if the target for 2025/26 therefore would be lower than this year given that this year CWA is unlikely to hit target either and it was confirmed that it is predicted to be lower.

Regarding the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework data presented in the report the Chair commented that the past end date indicator was 'green' (on track), but how could a total of 204 past the end date be on track? The Assistant Principal Funding and Performance commented that the measure of the ESFA is different to the CWA calculation which is more accurate and predictable as CWA measures those on programme past end date. It was further explained that the challenge around apprenticeship retention and achievement is that learners are on multiple year programmes and the reportable year will vary so if a learner goes overdue, they will hit future years' data. Now that CWA is using EBS and Strata for reporting more forecast data is accessible, providing more transparency and prediction of when and how an apprentice is progressing toward their end date, enabling visibility of likely achievement and in which year achievement would be realised.

In future the Chair suggested that governors would be interested to see these predictions to better understand the in year and future impact. This would expose where

there have been problems in previous years for example where CWA had thought it was making inroads but not seeing achievement rates getting better. This has been evident in this academic year where some of the achievement is 'baked in' from previous years, 2020 COVID being a prime example.

6 Operational Oversight Report (including vulnerable learner achievement)

Governors commented that the apprenticeship dataset included in the report was particularly helpful and easy to read and interpret. It was noted that comparable data at the same point (October) will be available this year, October 2025.

The Chair commented on best case achievement reported at 74.3% and asked if there was a sense of probable achievement. At this point in time, it is difficult to forecast but it is predicted to be better than last year. It will follow retention within a percentage or two. It is dependent on each learner and their ability to achieve in year or if they are likely to achieve after year end and achieve in 2025/26. An initial forecast may be available for the next meeting of the committee.

APF&P

S Anstiss and S Moore left the meeting at 9.15am

Governors were interested to understand the issues around attendance for adult learners. The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality commented that with F05 (Foundation and Engagement) for example, attendance is low, but retention is high. There is a story behind each learner but attendance for adults traditionally and historically is low even though the outturn for achievement and retention is robust. The issues are around individual circumstances rather than around the quality of the provision. A deep dive of this area is planned and will be reported to the committee at the next meeting.

DCEO/VPC&Q

Likewise, a governor commented that there is a difference between attendance at English and maths. Maths looks significantly lower. Where there are issues the individual QIPs do provide actions and a summary of these will be provided to the committee as where attendance is below 85% reporting is expected in APR meetings. In addition, Course Director progress reviews are also in place to track and scrutinise attendance on every course. There are three areas in particular that are subject to further scrutiny currently, and these are identified for action and improvement in the QIP. Finally, a governor highlighted the low enrolment on full cost courses, 284 actual against 678 target and questioned if this was still achievable given that most enrolments would come through Technology and as discussed in the previous agenda item, recruitment targets have not been achieved. The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality confirmed that the target is still achievable given that full cost programmes like gas and oil are high turnover, short courses.

The Chair highlighted that faculty F04 in table 6.1 showed a history of lower attendance than other areas and wondered if there was a higher proportion of 2-year programmes such as A Levels. It was confirmed that the other faculties in the main are one-year programmes. A Level retention in year 1 (2022/23) within this faculty was an issue and therefore impacted attendance in 2023/24 but is now, year to date, more positive on retention, albeit slightly lower than other areas.

It was noted that the HE enrolment figures in the report do not count the number of level 4 learners. Actual to date enrolments therefore is only 10 learners short of target, so not as big a shortfall as the table detailed.

The committee discussed the vulnerable learner data presented at the request of governors at the last meeting. The report does show a positive picture and supports the robust nature of support provided for these learners. The Chair acknowledged the statistics but asked for evidence to concur this position as governors are reassured that these learners are supported well but the data shows that achievement is relatively low in comparison, so what happens next for these learners. The Ofsted inspection will

evidence just how well the college supports these learners and will demonstrate where learners are progressing and if they are progressing onto their planned destination.

7 **Annual Monitoring Report ARU 2023/24**

UcWA has started validating early years practice and psychosocial programmes with ARU. If this can be completed by September 2025 UcWA will be offering the validated model to take enrolments. If not achieved in time for the 2025/26 academic year learners will commence under the franchised model to ensure no break in service in terms of recruitment.

Due to the pause of OfS registration and the Lifelong Learning Entitlement UcWA has had to replan its strategy regarding higher level learning. Governors were informed about the Level 4 funded courses that fit with CWA pathways and programmes will commence with Computing and Health Science. It was reported that the OU validation project has been pulled and after 2 years of working toward a partnership the project is not commercially viable for UcWA to pursue.

The Chair surmised, therefore, that the UcWA 2024-2035 HE Strategy is also not viable. The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality said optimistically that it is salvageable with the level 4 funded course project (loan funded). The 2025/26 element of the strategy will be reviewed after easter and presented to the corporation for re-approval. There are other opportunities that UcWA will explore, and dialogue is happening with Wisbech Town Football Club around developing a Sports Academy.

HoG

A governor commented that HE is in national freefall, and it will be harder for HE in FE settings to achieve growth. It was agreed that the future of HE is uncertain, not in terms of quality, but financial viability, so it was suggested that HE is set as a priority area on the agenda for the Finance and General Purposes committee.

HoG

8 **Headline Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25**

The new format QIP has been aligned to the SAR and includes emerging themes from in-year performance. There are 12 improvement areas to progress. The interim Head of Quality will carry out the progress reviews for reporting to the committee. It was noted that this is a 'live' document and, therefore, responsibility to progress improvement may be subject to change. The committee agreed the new framework and SMART targets at operational level will be developed. Governors asked if a mindmap could be drawn up to articulate how the APRs, and self-assessments etc feed into the QIP.

DCEO/VPC&Q

9 **Single Equality Scheme/Action Plan**

Governors received the updated plan noting the review included the impact that the target has had on the learner or how the impact will be measured. In summary, the action plan has been aligned with APRs and the self-assessment model to show the distance travelled and 'BRAGging' rights.

The informative talk by 3 dads walking and PAPYRUS, a charity to promote awareness of suicide amongst young people had an impact on the attendees and led to at least one student raising safeguarding concerns about a friend, positive feedback from a parent of an attendee, and two student ambassadors writing an article about what they had learned for the next student newsletter. The talk was so impactful, the college is organising a '1 college walking' event on 22 October 2025.

10 **Strategic Targets 2024/25 Progress Review**

In summary, the report confirmed good and reasonable progress had been made against the 2024/25 strategic targets. The implementation of the HE strategy is behind target, as discussed under item 7 above.

Target 4.10, the migration of the apprenticeship ILR to EBS is achieved. This is now used for all learners except for HE returns which are made through ARU.

<p>11 Any Other Business There were no other items of business.</p>	
<p>12 Chair’s Items for Briefing to Corporation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great progress has been realised with apprenticeships. The percentage of apprentices past their end date has reduced from 18% (July 2023) and is now at 8%. The target for the team has been reset to below 5% by the summer. • Plumbing remains a concern, but the committee continues to keep apprenticeships/technology in focus as a priority area. • Apprenticeship best case achievement is reported at 74.3%, an improvement on 2023/24. • Attendance and retention were a key focus at the meeting and the committee sought assurance that strategies are in place to maintain higher levels of retention up to the year end. • The financial viability of UcWA is a concern and ability to fulfil the 2024-35 HE Strategy. The committee asks the Finance and General Purposes committee to set this as a priority area on their agenda. • A new format Headline QIP has been aligned to the SAR and includes emerging themes from in-year performance. The committee will keep the 12 improvement areas identified in focus. • The college is planning a ‘1 college walking’ event on 22 October 2025 further to the 3 dads walking informative talk held recently with PAPYRUS, a charity to promote awareness of suicide amongst young people. • Sam Fletcher has now completed two terms of office and steps down. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, has thanked Sam for her significant contribution and support for the college over the years. 	Chair
<p>13 Date and Time of Next Meeting Wednesday 4 June at 8:30am, Remote Meeting, via TEAMS</p>	

Meeting ended at 10.05am